

music at convocation hall

Patricia Tao, piano
Martin Riseley, violin
Alycia Au, violin
Aaron Au, viola
Tanya Prochazka, cello

Friday, September 5, 2003

7:15 pm *Pre-Concert Introduction*
by **Dr David Cook**
Main floor, Convocation Hall
8:00 pm *Concert*



Arts Building
University of Alberta

Program

String Quartet No. 2 in D Major (1881)	Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)
Allegro moderato	
Scherzo	
Notturno	
Finale	
Martin Riseley, violin	
Alycia Au, violin	
Aaron Au, viola	
Tanya Prochazka, cello	
Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 119 (1949)	Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)
Andante Grave, Moderato Animato	
Moderato	
Allegro ma non troppo	
Tanya Prochazka, cello	
Patricia Tao, piano	
Quintet for Piano and Strings, Op. 57 (1940)	Dimitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
Prelude: Lento - Poco piu mosso - Lento	
Fugue: Adagio	
Scherzo: Allegretto	
Intermezzo: Lento	
Finale: Allegretto	
Patricia Tao, piano	
Martin Riseley, violin	
Alycia Au, violin	
Aaron Au, viola	
Tanya Prochazka, cello	

Program Notes

Aleksandr Porfir'yevich Borodin
b. 31 October/12 November 1833~ St. Petersburg
d. 15/27 February 1887~ St. Petersburg

String Quartet, No. 2 in D Major (1881)

Aleksandr Borodin, Russia's most famed chemist, also stands as an important figure in Russian music. Although his chamber music is slender in size, Borodin claimed himself immortality becoming known as one of the "Mighty Five," standing along side of Balakirev, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky. Written in the summer of 1881, the *String Quartet, no 2* is an important work in the development of the string quartet in Russia. Before the quartets of Tchaikovsky and Borodin, the Russian string quartet as a genre was yet to be fully established—it seemed of little importance. In 1871, with the founding of the Russian String Quartet, new life surged through Russian chamber music and by extension, the string quartet. Borodin's quartet not only exerted considerable influence, it also represents his musical ideals. His focus on "real tunes" is evident throughout the work as melody reigns, showing his preference for lyricism over abstraction and development of small motivic units.

The first movement opens with a tuneful line played by the cello and immediately taken up by the first violin. The alternation evidenced in these opening measures is a facet of the movement, which offers only brief moments in which the second violin and viola share in melodic material.

The Scherzo not only replaces the usual trio by expanding the movement to full sonata-form, it also reorients the usual order of movements, providing stronger contrast between the first movement and the Nocturne. It opens light-hearted in tone; however, only the sweeping rhapsodic thirds of the slower waltz-like second theme bring the otherwise sprightly movement into the same lyrical orbit as the rest of the work.

With the opening of the Nocturne, a heavy and languorous atmosphere melts into sensuous relaxation, as the well-known theme appears first in the cello. The second theme, a *risoluto* scale-passage, heightens the germ of passion planted in the opening measures. The ever-changing color of the movement concludes in mellow ripeness.

Based on the varied treatment of two themes and a contrasting second subject, the question-answer design of the Finale is at times more angular than the previous movements. While melody still dominates, it lacks the overall lyricism previously seen—perhaps justifying the comment frequently made which suggests that the Finale fails to compare to the three preceding movements.

Sergey Prokofiev

b. 11/23 April 1891~ Sontsovka, Bakhmutsk region, Yekaterinoslav district, Ukraine

d. 5 March 1953~ Moscow

Sonata for Cello and Piano in C Major, Op. 119 (1949)

Prokofiev's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* comes out of a long period of great turmoil in the composer's life. Contingent on the promise that he would retain his passport and be permitted to perform abroad, Prokofiev had returned to his homeland after fleeing it nearly twenty years earlier, following the October Revolution of 1917. In 1938, however, Prokofiev was stripped of his passport, bringing an end to foreign concert tours. Despite the restrictions placed on him, Prokofiev was vital to Soviet culture. Although he became something of a golden haired boy following Stalin's scathing review of Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth*, the favor he enjoyed soon ended. In 1948, with Stalin's anti-formalism campaign, both Prokofiev and Shostakovich, who together had been important representatives of the formalistic anti-national movement in music, suddenly faced strong disapproval.

Prokofiev never fully recovered from this blow—yet as one might expect, suffering is often difficult to detect in his music. Written only one year after Stalin's campaign, the *Sonata for cello and piano* displays Prokofiev's continued optimism. Constructed in three movements, the sonata fully exploits the deep singing tone of the cello while providing great opportunity for technical prowess.

The first movement opens with a long winding melody on the cello. Although initially mellow in tone, the work is far from sleepy and melancholic—on the contrary, even within the first movement it requires strength and vigor on the part of the performer. While the piano accompaniment is spare and uncluttered, shifting between folk-like figures and complicated rhythmic and harmonic gestures, it too is permitted brief moments of technical display throughout the work.

The Scherzo skips along as the cello alternates between pizzicato, staccato, and arco articulations. This light-heartedness frames the middle cantabile section, which sings with lyricism and beauty. The Finale draws on material from the first two movements, culminating in a fantasia-like coda. Despite its robust character and piquant contrasts, the movement is essentially lyrical and brings the sonata to an exhilarating close making full use of the cello as it traverses up and down the full extent of its range.

Dmitry Shostakovich

b. 12/25 September 1906~ St. Petersburg

d. 9 August 1975~ Moscow

Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op. 57 (1940)

Under the heavy weight of government restriction and grave suffering among the people of his homeland, Shostakovich succeeded in forging a musical language of colossal emotional power. The *Piano Quintet*, winner of the Stalin Prize, is not only one of Shostakovich's greatest compositions but is also an important work within modern music. Completed in 1940 during the uneasy months before Hitler overturned his pact

with Stalin and invaded Russia, the work came at a very tenuous time in Russian history. Additional tension arose from prevalent attitudes toward chamber music, which was held as a bourgeois idiom and was strongly discouraged under the cult of the proletariat and the reign of Socialist Realism.

Composers such as Myaskovsky, Shebalin and Prokofiev carefully watched, wondering if Shostakovich could set a new precedent and break the chamber music taboo. Despite the political climate, the work premiered at the Moscow Conservatory with Shostakovich at the piano. So enthusiastic was the response that any question regarding the future of Russian chamber music diminished and the performance rapidly became viewed as a political demonstration. Stalin's reign, however, would ensure that any effects felt by the demonstration would be a temporary respite. Structured in five movements, the Prelude opens clearly and laconically. With the exception of the frenzied Scherzo, the economy with which the movement opens remains throughout the work, which draws on strict simplicity of style and expressivity over virtuosity. With the middle section, a lighter, more transparent minuet replaces the measured tone of the opening. The recapitulation, as is usual in Shostakovich's works, is heavier with more complex tonalities.

Echoing the Prelude's austere tone, the fugue subject is announced on muted strings. In a quiet and unhurried manner, it is picked up by each instrument descending until it sounds in the bass register of the piano. Continuous and rhythmic motion pervades the Fugue as it broadens, growing more intense until finally a climactic and resounding fortissimo is heard before it dies away ending the movement in the quiet tone with which it started.

The Scherzo's verve and vitality, together with its curt rhythms, contrast sharply with the previous two movements. With the introduction of the second theme, Shostakovich creates unusual color as the piano shines with its rhythmic passages chiming out of its uppermost registers, creating sharp contrast to the clear-cut chords sounding in the strings.

As the strings soar over pizzicato movement in the piano, peace reigns throughout the Intermezzo, governed by its free flowing melody. Beauty, lyricism, and color dominate the movement as it delicately moves toward its climax, marked *appassionato*. Dispelling any gloomy thoughts that may have preceded it, the Finale provides a sense of rejuvenation reiterating, the fresh spirit of the Scherzo.

Notes by Deanna C. Davis

A native of Lethbridge, Alberta, **Aaron Au** is currently a first violinist with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra as well as Visiting Assistant Professor of Viola, Violin and Chamber Music at the University of Alberta where he is also a *Winspear Fellow*.

A student of Andrew Dawes and Gerald Stanick at the University of British Columbia where he studied both violin and viola, Aaron graduated Head of the Class in 1998. He was then awarded the *Johann Strauss Foundation Scholarship for the Advanced Study of Music in Austria* and pursued a year of studies at the Universitaet Mozarteum in Salzburg Austria with Thomas Riebl and Claudia Bussian.

A frequent guest of CBC Radio, Aaron has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician on both violin and viola in concerts across Canada, the U.S. and Europe. He has also won various competitions including the 1993 CIBC National Music Festival where he was violist of the Bridge Trio. A member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, Aaron served as concertmaster for the orchestra's tour of Canada and Japan. He also performed with the Vancouver Symphony and Opera Orchestras as both violinist and violist. In the summer of 2001, Aaron participated as a faculty member at the Agassiz Music Festival in Winnipeg, performing chamber music as both violinist and violist as well as coaching several talented young musicians. Aaron recently completed an extremely successful tour of Cuba as principal violist of the University of Alberta Academy Strings Orchestra.

Aaron is currently working on his Doctor of Music degree at the University of Alberta where he has been awarded the *University of Alberta PhD Scholarship*. Under the guidance of Martin Riseley and Tanya Prochazka, he is pursuing studies in string performance and pedagogy.

Alycia Au, a native of Lethbridge, Alberta, has completed her first year of the Masters of Music Performance program at the University of Alberta where she studies with Martin Riseley. A versatile violinist, Alycia has seen much success as a chamber musician, orchestral player and soloist. At age 14, Alycia was the violinist of The Bridge Trio, which took first prize in 1993 at the CIBC National Music Festival and which later recorded for the CBC. In 1998 and 1999 her ensemble won first prize at the Friends of Chamber Music Competition in Vancouver, BC. November 2000 and September 2001 saw Alycia perform chamber music as a guest artist on the University of Alberta's Friends and Faculty series. As an orchestral player, Alycia has been a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada for three summers on their tours across Canada and Japan, and is currently concertmaster of the U of A Symphony Orchestra and Academy Strings. A promising young soloist as well, Alycia has had the privilege of working with renowned artists such as Midori and Pinchas Zukerman, and attended Maestro Zukerman's National Arts Centre Young Artist's Program this past summer. Last year, Alycia made solo appearances with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the UBC Symphony Orchestra.

Alycia recently graduated as Head of the Class from the University of British Columbia where she studied with Andrew Dawes and received a Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance.

Originally Australian, **Tanya Prochazka** studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Andre Navarra (cello), Jean Hubeau (chamber music) and Indiana University with Janos Starker. International soloist, recitalist and chamber musician. Was cellist of Ensemble I, Vienna; principal cellist of Scottish Baroque Ensemble, London Mozart Players, English Sinfonia; taught at the Royal Academy and Guildhall School, London, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australian National Academy of Music. Gives regular Masterclasses and orchestra clinics. Records for Atma and Arktos featuring French, American, English and Czech music. World premier recording of the New Goldberg Variations with Jacques Despres.

Martin Riseley has been Concertmaster of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra since 1994, and has performed concertos under conductors such as Grzegorz Nowak, Enrique Batiz, Uri Mayer, Leif Segerstam, Enrique Barrios, and Jorge Mester, and his solo and chamber concerts have appeared on National Radio. He recently gave the North American premiere of the Violin Concerto by Gavin Bryars, and played the Chaconne from the "Red Violin" by John Corigliano at the ESO's summer festival. A concerto, written for him by the New Zealand composer Christopher Blake, will be premiered in 2002, as will a concerto by the ESO's composer-in-residence, Allan Gilliland. He is currently Artist-in-Residence at the Department of Music at the University of Alberta, where with fellow faculty members Stephane Lemelin and Tanya Prochazka they surveyed the complete literature for piano and strings by Brahms last season, and will this year perform the trios of Beethoven. He was also a resident performer at the 2000 Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, where he appeared in concert with Andres Diaz, Andrew Dawes and the St. Lawrence String Quartet. He returned to the Festival this year to perform with Jane Coop and Amanda Forsyth, among others. In the fall, he is scheduled to perform the Schubert Quintet and the Schumann Piano Quintet with Pinchas Zukerman, Amanda Forsyth and Jon Kimura Parker at the National Arts Center in Ottawa.

Patricia Tao Joined the U of A faculty in 2002. Performed for 10 years as pianist of the Guild Trio. Tours in Europe as "Artistic Ambassador" for the United States and throughout the U.S. for Columbia Artist's Community Concert series. Residencies at the Tanglewood Music Center and the University of Virginia. Live radio broadcasts on NPR's "Performance Today," WNYC's "Around New York," WQXR's "The Listening Room," and the St. Louis public television series "Premiere Performances." Commissions and premieres of new works by leading American composers, including William Bolcom, Harvey Sollberger, and Sheila Silver. Has recorded on the CRI label. Solo CD for Arktos to be released in fall, 2003.

Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, Master of Music with Distinction from Indiana University, and Doctor of Musical Arts from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Principal teachers were Leonard Shure, Gyorgy Sebok, and Gilbert Kalish. Chamber music studies with Bernard Greenhouse, Leon Fleisher, Julius Levine and Timothy Eddy. Has also taught at Western Washington University and the University of Virginia.

Upcoming Events:

September

17 Wednesday, 4:00 pm
Lecture/Discussion (Composer Forum)
with Guest Composer
eldritch Priest
Studio 27, Fine Arts Building
Free admission

19 Friday, 8:00 pm
Faculty & Friends
Kathleen Corcoran, soprano
Harold Wiens, baritone
Roger Admiral, piano
*Featuring solo and duet lieder
by Hugo Wolf, Robert Schumann and
Johannes Brahms*
Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

22 Monday, 12:00 pm
Noon Hour Organ Recital
The recital presents a variety of organ
repertoire played by students, faculty and
guests of the University of Alberta.
Free admission

26 Friday, 6:00 pm
Sonal Mansingh in Performance
Presented by the
Indian Students Association
Admission: \$15 members,
\$10 non-members
For information, call
435-0937 or 441-3845

27 Saturday, 8:00 pm

New Music Series
BEAMS
Electroacoustic and improvisation
Studio 27, Fine Arts Building
Admission: TBA

October

5 Sunday, 1:00 pm
Folkways Alive!
Presented by the University of Alberta
in partnership with Smithsonian
Folkways Recordings
A Gala Performance featuring
Mahotella Queens Quartette
Mike Seeger and
Master of Ceremonies, Tommy Banks
Winspear Centre for Music
For ticket information call 428-1414
For additional information call
492-7887

5 Sunday, 8:00 pm
University Symphony Orchestra
Tanya Prochazka, Conductor

6 Monday, 12:00 Noon
Music at Noon, Convocation Hall
Student Recital Series
Featuring students from the Department of
Music. Fee admission

Please donate to Bank Campus Food

Unless otherwise indicated

Admission: \$5/student/senior, \$10/adult
Convocation Hall, Arts Building

Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice.
Please call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded
message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).



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